a strategy of drawing programmes in the form of telecommunication Tribal Sub Plan as a separate component of main plan of the department.

In addition, the Government propose to provide telephone in every village by the year 2000 to benefit the rural population including backward regions.

Increase of Air Fare

303. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO :
SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been an increase in the fare of Indian Airlines since October 96;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the extent to which the surplus income likely to be earned by the Indian Airlines due to increase in fare?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

New Mining Policy

304. SHRI ANNA SAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have finalised New Mining Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the objective of policy changes and its likely impact in terms of fresh investment and employment generation, State-wise; and

(d) the target set for fresh investment from the Government, private sector, foreign direct investment and foreign financial institutions for the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b). The National Mineral Policy was announced in March, 93 and laid on the Table of the House on 5th March, 1993.

(c) The objectives of the policy are as follows :

- to explore for identification of mineral wealth in the land and in off-shore areas;
- to develop mineral resources taking into account the national and strategic considerations and to ensure their adequate supply and best use keeping in view the present needs and future requirements;
- to promote necessary linkages for smooth and uninterrupted development of the mineral industry to meet the needs of the country;
- to promote research and development in minerals;
- to ensure establishment of appropriate educational and training facilities for human resources development to meet the manpower requirements of the mineral industry;
- to minimise adverse effects of mineral development on the forest, environment and ecology through appropriate protective measures; and
- to ensure conduct of mining operations with due regard to safety and health of all concerned.

It is expected that the policy will encourage private investments both domestic and foreign and result in increase in employment opportunities.

(d) The Government has not fixed any target for the current financial year.

Telephone Connections in Maharashtra

305. SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of telephone connections provided in Maharashtra during the year 1995-96 and till date, district-wise;

(b) the number of persons in waiting-list in the State upto June, 1996 district-wise;

(c) the time by which the waiting list is likely to be exhausted, district-wise;

(d) the number of additional telephone lines likely to be provided during this year to meet the demand, district-wise;

(e) whether some of the telephone exchanges in the State are not functioning properly;

(f) if so, the details thereof, district-wise; and

(g) the steps taken to modernise these telephone exchanges?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) As per Statement enclosed.

(b) As per Statement enclosed.

(c) The existing waiting list is likely to be cleared by 1997-98 except in a few cases due to technical non-feasibility.

(d) As per Statement enclosed.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Not applicable in view of (e) above.

(g) All those exchanges whose life is expired are being replaced by modern electronic exchanges in a phased manner.